

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To assign Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning responsibilities to all levels of Department management and provide a central point of coordination for these activities within the Department and with other departments and agencies.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This Directive addresses all emergency preparedness policies regarding readiness, response, recovery, and mitigation, including policies regarding the continuation or rapid restoration of the Department's vital functions under all hazard conditions. These hazard conditions range from accidents, fires, natural or technological disasters, and civil disorder to military or terrorist attack.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Security and Law Enforcement, Emergency Preparedness and Administration, is responsible for the material contained in this Directive.
- 4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 0320, Emergency Preparedness Planning Procedures and Operational Requirements.
- 5. RESCISSION:** VA Handbook 0320.1, Emergency Preparedness Planning Procedures and Operational Requirements, October 8, 1997 and VA Handbook 0320.2, Emergency Preparedness Planning, VA Central Office Emergency Operations Center Standing Operating Procedures, October 8, 1997.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

/s/  
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Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Information and Technology

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/  
Eugene A. Brickhouse  
Assistant Secretary for Human Resources  
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## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

**1. PURPOSE.** This Directive provides Departmentwide policy for the management and administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) all hazards Emergency Preparedness Planning Program including VA's Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan. It assigns emergency preparedness responsibilities to all levels of Department management and provides a central point of coordination for these activities within the Department and with other departments and agencies. Departmentwide emergency planning and coordination activities are extensions of the regular missions of the Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials. The VA COOP Plan will be governed by the policies contained in this Directive, and applies Departmentwide. Procedures for implementing these policies are found in VA Handbook 0320, Emergency Preparedness Planning Procedures and Operational Requirements.

## 2. POLICY

a. Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials will have sufficient capabilities to meet essential needs during a national emergency, including the capability to respond to the needs of individuals and State and local governments where required by law or binding Directive.

b. An effective COOP Plan requires identification of functions to be performed during an emergency; the development of plans for performing these functions; the development of the capability to implement the plans; and analysis of events to formulate mitigation strategies that would lessen the impact of future events.

c. Emergency plans and programs will be developed and tested Departmentwide as an integral part of VA's continuing activities.

d. Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials are authorized to redelegate the functions assigned by this Directive, and to authorize successive redelegations to organizations or employees under their respective jurisdiction. Copies of these written delegations shall be sent to the Director, Emergency Preparedness and Administration. All delegations and redelegations must comply with VA Directive 0000, Delegation of Authority.

e. No VA employee in the Ready Reserve will be unavailable for active military duty in a national emergency by reason of his or her VA position or assignment. Therefore, conflicting civilian and military obligations on the part of VA employees will be avoided.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Secretary of Veterans Affairs.** The Secretary ensures that an effective all-hazards emergency preparedness program and COOP Plan are established. Emergency preparedness is a line responsibility and a management function at every level of VA. The Executive Orders and Presidential Decision Directives referenced in paragraph 4 assign emergency preparedness functions to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. In Handbook 0320,

the Secretary approves a standing delegation of authority to provide the authority necessary to ensure continuity of essential VA operations during a period of national emergency.

**b. The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration**

(1) Ensures the implementation of the Department's Emergency Preparedness Planning Program through the Office of Security and Law Enforcement.

(2) Ensures the development and dissemination of up-to-date emergency management policies and procedures Departmentwide.

(3) Oversees program operations and activities, both within and outside the Department, through the responsibilities and activities of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Security and Law Enforcement.

**c. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Security and Law Enforcement**

(1) Serves as the Department's Emergency Preparedness Officer, and develops procedures related to the duties of the Secretary as an officer of the United States who is eligible to act as President if the offices of President and Vice President are vacant and in accordance with the statutory line of succession in Title 3 USC §19.

(2) Formulates and maintains a multiyear, national emergency preparedness plan for the Department.

(3) Directs VA emergency preparedness activities and serves, in lieu of the Secretary, as the Department's representative to senior Federal emergency preparedness councils and committees regarding national security emergency preparedness and continuity of government.

(4) Serves as the Department's point of contact for all mobilization, response, or informational emergency alerts or notifications.

(5) Participates in the Department's review process of proposed Federal rule changes, internal or other Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) policy documents, and for comments on, or changes to, applicable emergency management legislation.

(6) Schedules and conducts training and education programs incorporating emergency preparedness and civil defense information necessary to ensure an effective national response by VA for national security emergency preparedness and continuity of government.

(7) Consults with the Director of FEMA to ensure that the Department's plans are consistent with the Federal Response Plan (FRP) and with national security guidelines and policies.

(8) Designs measures to facilitate rapid and effective transition from routine to emergency operations as well as continuity of government operations with emphasis given to the development of a Departmentwide plan to meet the requirements of Presidential Executive Order 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, November 18, 1988.

(9) Prepares plans to achieve full staffing and operational capability of VA's emergency relocation sites including transfer of designees under specified conditions.

(10) Ensures VA emergency operating records (Category A) and, if applicable, financial and legal rights records (Category B) are identified and available at VA relocation site(s).

**d. Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and Deputy Assistant Secretaries**

(1) Identify VA essential planning functions to be performed by their office and determine if they constitute lead or support roles within the Department.

(2) Develop plans to support their essential functions within the Department and coordinate emergency preparedness plans with the Director, Emergency Preparedness and Administration.

(3) Develop the capability to support these plans.

(4) Exercise these plans at least annually and provide a critique of the exercise(s) to the Office of Security and Law Enforcement, Emergency Preparedness and Administration Office.

(5) Establish standing delegation of authority and list of successors to ensure continuity of essential VA operations during any major emergency or disaster.

(a) Designate an Emergency Planner and alternate who can effectively represent the organization. Emergency Planners have the primary responsibility for planning and developing emergency procedures. They ensure that plans and resources are maintained in a constant state of readiness to include the selection, shipment and maintenance of emergency operating records to relocation sites. They provide counsel to the Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and field organizations regarding emergency procedures, authorities and recommended actions. This responsibility requires that they have direct access to their respective office directors.

(b) In developing plans or communicating emergency messages pertaining to National Security Emergency Preparedness, Emergency Planners are to interact directly with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Security and Law Enforcement and/or any element delegated by that Office. They will inform that Office of any emergency situations originating at the field level and provide appropriate status reports to ensure intra-agency and interagency coordination.

#### 4. REFERENCES

- a. National Security Act of 1947, as amended.
- b. Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, as amended.
- c. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended.
- d. VA and DOD Health Resources Sharing and Emergency Operations Act, Public Law 97-174, May 4, 1982, as amended, Title 38 USC §8111A.
- e. National Security Decision Directive Number 47 (NSDD-47), July 22, 1982, Emergency Mobilization Preparedness.
- f. Executive Order 12472, Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Functions, April 3, 1984.
- g. Executive Order 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, November 18, 1988.
- h. Executive Order 12657, Federal Emergency Management Agency Assistance in Emergency Management Planning at Commercial Nuclear Power Plants, November 18, 1988.
- i. Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 39, U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism, June 21, 1995 (Classified).
- j. VA Handbook 6300.2, Management of the Vital Records Program, January 12, 1998.
- k. Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 62, Protection Against Unconventional Threats to the Homeland and Americans Overseas, May 22, 1998.
- l. Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 63, Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), May 22, 1998.
- m. 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 101-2, Occupant Emergency Program, July 1, 1998.
- n. 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1236, Management of Vital Records, July 1, 1998.
- o. Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 67, Continuity of Operations Planning, October 21, 1998.
- p. The Federal Response Plan, (Public Law 93-288, as amended), April 1999.